Date: July 10, 2020

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Meeting Location: Video conference	**Project:** Howard County Complete Streets

Meeting Description: Complete Streets Implementation Team Meeting #7

Participants:

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Introduction

The purpose of the meeting was to provide members of the Complete Streets Implementation Team (CSIT) information on the draft Community Engagement Plan (CEP), the status of Design Manual revisions, information on the project prioritization process, and a brief update on the sidewalk policy.

Chris Eatough and Jeff Riegner welcomed all attendees and reviewed the agenda.

Members of the CSIT were provided a copy of the draft minutes from the June 3 meeting in advance. Christiana Rigby made a motion to approve the minutes and Jennifer White seconded the motion. The group unanimously approved the minutes.

Leah Kacanda, Jeff, and Chris led the group through the presentation attached to these minutes.

Community Engagement Plan

Leah provided an update on the status of the CEP. She reviewed the Capital Project Process and described the draft Preliminary Design Workshop Checklist. She asked that County staff provide comments on the checklist via email, as this draft will serve as the template for additional checklists that will be developed for other steps of the public engagement process.

Leah shared how projects will be classified based on capital budget codes. The "capital project process' would apply to all bridge (B) and road construction (J) projects, and some road resurfacing (H), sidewalk/curb (K), and traffic/intersection (T) projects. The "operating project process" would apply to some road resurfacing (H), sidewalk/curb (K), and traffic/intersection (T) projects. The current plan is that the County project manager determines which H, K, and T projects constitute a capital or operating process.

Chris Eatough said that different terminology may be more useful, since all projects are coming from the capital budget and not the operating budget. The group considered the terms large or small, major or minor, and complex or simple.

Christiana Rigby agreed that the terms "capital" and "operating" would lead to confusion with the budget process. She noted that the distinction between major and minor would work better than new and maintenance.

Tom Butler noted the difference may be classified as producing an asset versus maintaining an asset which relates to the County's bonding capacity. He agreed major and minor would be more appropriate terminology. There seemed to be consensus on this terminology.

Jeff asked whether there are any other distinctions between major and minor projects. Larry Schoen suggested using percent changed to create a clearer distinction between project types and asked where a sidewalk project would belong. Chris responded that sidewalks could fall in the major or minor category depending on the size and impact of the project.

Leah then shared the operational (now minor) project process, which formalizes the current process of project identification, project prioritization, funding, design development, and construction. Kris Jagarapu asked for clarification on the annual open house, which is the public engagement component of the project prioritization phase. Chris responded that the open house is currently held every January by the Office of Transportation to fulfill the requirements of *BikeHoward*. He noted this past year, information about Complete Streets was also included at the Open House.

Leah presented the combined process for developer flow chart, which would apply to Major Subdivisions and Commercial Site Development Plans but would not apply to minor subdivisions and non-commercial site development plans. David Cookson noted the Multimodal Transportation Board (MTB) would be engaged in a similar fashion to the Historic Preservation Commission. Applicants would provide information to the MTB after their pre-

submission community meeting around the time of the Environmental Concept Plan (ECP) submission. Chad Edmondson noted this should work well because the ECP process often takes 2-3 months, which would enable time to get on the MTB agenda prior to the initial plan submission.

Larry asked how many projects the review process would this apply to and what the impact would be to the MTB agenda. David C. and Chad replied that MTB would be reviewing less than 50 projects per year, and that they envision these being brief conversations with the applicant rather than a full formal presentation in order to keep the MTB meetings manageable.

Kris noted that both the community and MTB would see development plan before County staff does. Christiana suggested that the concept plans be entered into PDOX so there is a record that a project exists.[1] Chad noted he will see if that is feasible. He noted it should be a true concept plan that shows existing and proposed land uses and bicycle and pedestrian facilities.

Christiana asked whether developers could submit the concept plan to the MTB in advance of the meeting so that Board members have comments prepared. David replied that what is shown to MTB would be similar to what shown to public at the Pre-Submission Community Meeting which is a conceptual sketch or rendering. Chris noted that the goal of MTB review is to identify potential bike and pedestrian connections to the site.

Larry asked when the traffic study comes into the site development process. Chad responded that the traffic study is submitted with the sketch plan for major projects, or with the first submission of the site development plan. Larry asked that expectations around the MTB meeting be clarified in the CEP.

Leah reviewed next steps, noting that a full draft of the CEP will be available for review by the next CSIT meeting. Jeff reminded the group that the CEP is due in the fall, and the updates to the Design Manual should be complete by next spring.

<u>Design Manual</u>

Jeff provided a summary of updates to the Design Manual. Chapter 1 - Introduction and General Information, will be rewritten to incorporate Complete Streets principles, the project delivery process, and the community engagement process. Chapter 2 - Design of Roads and Volume IV - Typical Sections will be updated based on the street typology. Chapter 3 - Bridges and Chapter 5 -Traffic will also be updated. Chapter 4 - Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance, will not be updated under this effort except for minor "housekeeping" items.

Jeff reviewed updates to Chapter 1. He noted that Chapter 1 will be revised to appeal to a broader audience. Section 1.1 will provide information on how the manual was developed and the Vulnerable Population Index. This section will also be a repository of all the documents relating to Complete Streets. Section 1.2 will consolidate major and minor capital projects, land development projects, project prioritization, the CEP, and exceptions. The current waivers section needs to be rewritten in order to comply with the Complete Streets policy. Section 1.3 Street Types will require a significant rewrite. It will describe what constitutes different types of context. *BikeHoward* and scenic roadways will be handled with overlays. It will also include information about how trade-offs are considered in areas of limited right-of-way. The remainder of Chapter 1 will not require as many edits since this information is addressed to a more technical audience.

Larry asked what information is included in Section 1.4 Engineering Reports. Jeff stated it includes a description of existing conditions and establishes the design criteria, but that the general purpose of the section is to state what

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[1] A tool for plan submission, review, approval and tracking using a paperless online system that allows parallel collaboration between agencies to review and markup plans, share comments and more easily identify potential conflicts and issues. ProjectDox offers automatic task notification and plan routing between the applicant and all review departments. It also incorporates tools to increase the effectiveness of the review process and reduce review cycle time.

gets incorporated into the report. In response to a follow-up question from Larry, Jeff noted that information about trip generation and traffic is addressed in Chapter 5.

Christiana asked whether the amount of ROW needs to change or expand to provide more opportunity for Complete Streets improvements, and whether that will be part of the Design Manual Change or changes to the Subdivision Regulations. Jeff responded that ROW width will be addressed by the cross sections that will be updated in Volume IV. He clarified that those sections are cross referenced by section 1.3.

Chad noted that Volume III and IV both have ROW details, but they are also being addressed as part of this effort.

Jeff then provided an overview of changes to Chapter 4. He noted that a few updates are necessary in order to comply with the Complete Streets policy, such as changing "eight-foot-wide bike path" to "ten-foot-wide shared use pathway." Chad clarified that Section 4.9, which discusses pathway width, applies exclusively to Downtown Columbia. Chris noted that recently built pathways in Downtown Columbia are 10 feet wide.

Larry asked what happens when there are separate facilities for bikes and pedestrians, such as a bike lane and a sidewalk. Jeff responded that this section does not deal with whether a pathway should be provided, but if one is provided how wide it should be.

Jeff noted other areas that may need slight modification is regarding the collector classifications, the background growth rate, and the Pedestrian Level of Service (PLOS) and Bicycle Level of Service (BLOS). These updates should not change the intent of the APFO tests.

Christiana expressed concern that increasing capacity too much in anticipation of future growth will create induced demand. Kris clarified that future trip generation is an estimate rather than an actual count, so some flexibility is needed, and this is a good time to have this discussion. Jeff responded that adjusting the background growth rate should address the problem of induced demand head on. If growth rates are set too high, there is a greater chance that facilities that are not needed will be built, inducing demand. The goal is to build enough facilities that debilitating congestion is not created. Chris noted that the question of background growth rate will need additional study to see what rates the region has been experiencing, and that any adjustment should align with recent reality.

Chad agreed that 6 percent is high and noted that there are not many multi-phase projects that extend beyond the first 3 years. Currently, developers rely on data from the State.

Kris added that the County has had a lot of internal conversations about the growth rate and agreed that 3 percent could be high, and that 6 percent is significantly high. He noted a lot of assumptions are made when future traffic is projected since it is not based on actual counts, but on how many trips a specific land use type is assumed to generate. For example, even though Wegman's may generate more traffic than a Food Lion, the underlying assumptions, which are based on land use and building square footage, are the same. Currently, the APFO analysis is limited to local intersections. The County may need other qualifiers and guidance in the regulations to allow them more flexibility when examining traffic impacts.

Jeff noted that the current description of BLOS and PLOS as they relate to Downtown Columbia are not clear, and asked whether County staff is comfortable with how they work. Chris noted he also does not understand how they work. Jeff noted it may not require a big change, but some rewording to make the process clear.

Jeff noted that each update to the Design Manual will be reviewed by the core team before coming to the CSIT. The next big step is developing content for Chapter 1 as described.

Larry asked when the CSIT will see details of road profiles, pathway details, and crossing details. Jeff responded that those elements will be included in two places. Cross sections were already presented to the CSIT and will be included in Volume IV, as well as Volume III Chapter 2. The CSIT can expect to review Chapter 2 in the next few months after Chapter 1 revisions are complete.

Larry asked if there will be revisions to the traffic study provisions that incorporate more elements than intersections and vehicular traffic. Jeff noted there is a provision for bicycle studies in Chapter 5, but it is dated. Updates will reflect current best practices included in *WalkHoward* and *BikeHoward* including level of traffic stress.

Project Prioritization

Jeff explained that an internal meeting to discuss Project Prioritization was held on June 19. The meeting included senior staff from across County government including the Administration, Budget Office, Office of Transportation (OOT), Department of Public Works (DPW), and Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ). The project prioritization process is fundamentally a budget issue, and the goal for the initial step is to better understand the capital budget development process in order to advance the agenda of Complete Streets policy while avoiding unnecessary disruptions to the budget process. The meeting confirmed that the process is complex and included a discussion of how prioritization may work for individual projects as opposed to a program of projects. The next step is to follow up with individual and small group interviews to identify how prioritization can fit into the budget development process.

Bruce noted it will be good to engage in more detailed discussions with everyone, and he will be reaching out to staff members of the CSIT to discuss.

Christiana asked whether the prioritization relates to whether or not to add a capital project but also within programs of projects. Bruce responded that those categories would be treated differently because there needs to be flexibility within programs of projects. Christiana agreed, noting that some types of project require a more reactive approach, such as sidewalk repairs.

Bruce said it would be good to have a better common understanding of what need exists within various categories. It is known that DPW has a lot of unmet needs, but we need more of that information in order to prioritize improvements to the network.

Jeff noted that we do not want to develop a rigid scoring system, but collections of higher or lower priority projects. A lot of improvements in the same area should happen at the same time to allow for economy of scale. Factors like access, safety, and equity also should be integrated into the process. He then provided a brief overview of the questions that will be used when meeting with staff, which include topics like how projects are added, how asset inventories are used, and how funds are allocated. Sam Triandos from WRA will be helping with this process. Sam used to work with the State of Maryland on capital programming.

Jennifer noted that there is a goal of revising the prioritization process to include factors like access, safety, and equity, but those factors are not included in the questions. Jeff responded that these initial questions are intended to establish the current process so that it will be easier to understand where to apply specific performance measures. Jennifer responded that it would be useful to understand if any of those factors are being considered currently, and whether those processes could be improved upon. Jeff agreed to incorporate Jennifer's suggestion in the interview questions.

Jeff reviewed the revised anticipated project prioritization schedule. Meetings and interviews will be conducted in late June into early July. The initial draft will be developed in July and early August. A refined draft will be reviewed by the core team at their August 19 meeting, and adjustments will be made as needed in order to get a refined draft to the CSIT by the September 2 meeting. The core team will approve the draft at their September 16 meeting, and the CSIT will approve the draft at their October 7 meeting, with anticipated delivery to County Council in October.

Brief Updates

Chris provided a brief update on the Sidewalk Policy. There have only been minor changes made since the last draft. Terminology was changed from sidewalks in the public right-of-way to sidewalks on public property along County roads, since the term right-of-way can be misunderstood. A footnote was also added to state that capital projects with sidewalks do not need to follow this process since there is a separate process outlined in the CEP.

WRA

Chad shared a situation that DPZ sees often, which is frontage improvements to a subdivision where there is a sidewalk within 100 feet. He asked where the expansion of a sidewalk across adjacent properties frontage would fall in the chart. Chris replied that would fall under scenario 3, "Sidewalk segment is an extension requested by Howard County Government as part of a development project," which would require adjacent property owners be notified. Chad noted that all work to install improvements would have to stay within the ROW, therefore their permission would not be required. Chris noted that if the County needs to use private property for grading, there is a standing process for that.

Christiana asked how the process works if there is a significant grade issue, like along Cradlerock Way where mud washes onto the sidewalk regularly because of grading. She asked whether sticking to the ROW is setting up for a failed project. Chris responded that if the project would benefit from grading with private property that can still be done, it would just require working with the property owner and negotiating. This would create an issue if the homeowner says no.

Chad asked whether the property owner notification timing had been rectified. The previous draft called for notification 8 weeks prior to construction, but it should be tied to a true milestone like plan approval. Chad and Chris agreed to work together to resolve this issue. Chris noted he would also get input from Tom Butler's team to see what makes sense from DPW's perspective. He also noted it may differ for County projects and developer projects.

Tom Butler indicated he would be happy to review. He also wanted to share an anecdote about a recent pathway installation in King's Arms. He shared a pathway was installed as part of a development process, but people were not aware that it would be installed, and DPW had to deal with extensive community complaints. Bruce noted that part of the issue may have been with the engagement process that happened originally. People will always object to something happening that they did not know about, and the County will always have to deal with those situations. Christiana noted that residents with issues can be directed to her. Tom noted that because of COVID, people who live adjacent to new facilities are more nervous about outsiders, and that even though the County may want multi-modal connectivity, those adjacent to project sites may not be supportive.

Chris noted the community engagement process is the key to addressing these issues. We want people to be aware of what is going on via the development processes and the capital improvement process so that they can comment at the appropriate time. This is more of a public engagement issue than an issue with the Sidewalk policy.

There were no further questions about the sidewalk policy.

Next Steps

Carl Gutschick asked when the Subdivision Regulations will be changed as part of the process. Jeff replied that the policy specifies the Subdivision Regulations be completed within 9 months of the completion of the Design Manual updates, although there will have to be some work in advance. Carl noted that the ECP is not considered the first plan submission even though it is, and the community meeting could be held after the ECP is submitted. He noted the subdivision regulations should be changed to match the proposed public engagement process for development projects, which might impact APFO. He noted that whether the ECP should be considered the first formal plan submission is a bigger issue than Complete Streets.

Larry asked whether the CEP will provide detail on the content of the submissions the MTB will review. He noted the first submission should be a concept plan with a rough indication of where facilities should go, and the goal should be that the developer does not need to provide more or less than what is needed to provide meaningful feedback.

Next Steps

Jeff noted three action items from this meeting:

- WRA will make updates to the CEP based on comments received and distribute to the CSIT

- The County will complete the interviews for the project prioritization process and Design Manual updates

- Updates will be made to Design Manual Chapter 1

The next CSIT meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, August 5 at 3:00 pm. Jeff noted that the same call in phone number and link will be used for all CSIT meetings.

Leah Kacanda, AICP